

branches of government and among the Federal Government, the States, and individual citizens. It also provided for a system of amendment that allows our democracy to correct past errors and omissions and to respond to new challenges. As we mark this anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, we celebrate the effort, the dedication, and the wisdom of our Founders and the blessings of liberty that resulted from their labors.

We also celebrate those who have struggled to move America closer to fulfilling the first and fundamental purpose expressed in the Constitution: “. . . to form a more perfect Union.” Among these heroes were the thousands who fought and died during the Civil War to keep our Nation united and to banish slavery from our land. The 13th Amendment to the Constitution is the fruit of their sacrifice: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States.” The courageous women and men who met at Seneca Falls, New York, 150 years ago also set the highest standards of citizenship. Recognizing that women, too, are entitled to share in America’s promise of equality, they began a crusade that resulted in the ratification of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote. Likewise, we honor American citizens of our century, black and white, who worked together, faced danger together, and sometimes died together in the struggle to end racial injustice in our society and move our Nation closer to the constitutional ideal of equality under the law. The 24th Amendment, guaranteeing all citizens the right to vote, reflects their spirit and commitment to true democracy.

As we seek to form a more perfect union at home, we also bear the responsibilities of citizenship in our world community. Throughout our history, we have sought to secure the blessings of liberty not only for ourselves, but for all people everywhere. We remember the Americans who fought two world wars against tyranny and oppression and who triumphed in the Cold War through faith in the promise of democracy. These men and women cared so intensely about our Nation and their fellow human beings that they were willing to forgo their own comfort

and sometimes even to sacrifice their own lives for the ideal of freedom envisioned by our Founders.

In commemoration of the signing of the Constitution and in recognition of the importance of active, responsible citizenship in preserving the Constitution’s blessings for our Nation, the Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17 as “Citizenship Day,” and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), requested that the President proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as “Constitution Week.”

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1998, as Citizenship Day and September 17 through September 23, 1998, as Constitution Week. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, educational, and religious organizations, to conduct meaningful ceremonies and programs in our schools, houses of worship, and other community centers to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the Constitution and the rights and duties of citizenship.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

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**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report of the
Commodity Credit Corporation
September 16, 1998**

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 13, Public Law 806, 80th Congress (15 U.S.C. 714k), I transmit herewith the report

of the Commodity Credit Corporation for fiscal year 1996.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 16, 1998.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Havel

September 16, 1998

The President. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, President Havel, Mrs. Havlova, friends from the Czech Republic, my fellow Americans. Welcome to the White House, Mr. President.

As a playwright, you could hardly have written a more dramatic scenario than the one you have in fact lived over the last 10 years. Your Presidency has reminded people around the world that words do matter, that creativity has a place in politics, that a nation's strength is measured not by its ability to control people but rather by the opposite: its success in moving and empowering them.

As you showed us in the press conference today, you have never lost the honesty, spontaneity, the contagious friendliness of your writing. I feel quite certain no other head of state would have appointed Frank Zappa as a cultural ambassador—[laughter]—or taken our favorite Czech-American, Madeleine Albright, out on the town in New York to hear some good music; or given the President of the United States a personally inscribed tenor saxophone and forced him to play it. [Laughter]

Since you became President, you have brought back democracy and civil society. You have led the Czech Republic to a place of prominence in the new Europe, and we look forward to your becoming a member of NATO.

Together we have been partners in Bosnia and in other Balkan trouble spots, working to repair the ravages of intolerance and injustice. And together we will be partners to build a peaceful, prosperous, and free Europe in the 21st century.

We value our ties to the Czech people. The first Czechs arrived in the New World in the 17th century, and many more came in the wake of the revolution of 1848. Dvorak

composed his magnificent, "New World Symphony," borrowing the rhythms he heard during his travels across the United States, especially from African-American folk music. The flag of the Czech Republic was designed and first flown in New York to honor a visit by the great patriot Tomas Masaryk. From athletes to artists, from actors to astronauts, from secretaries to Secretaries of State, Czech-Americans, many of whom are here tonight, have lent their gifts to our grateful Nation.

We shared the world's sadness when Czechoslovakia lost its freedom 50 years ago. We felt a similar sense of loss when the Prague Spring was followed by Soviet invasion in 1968. But you and your comrades, Mr. President, taught us again that all seasons are cyclical, that spring always returns. In 1989, your Velvet Revolution rejuvenated the entire world.

There is an old Czech-American saying that too much wisdom does not produce courage. That's a nice way of saying, I think, that too much time spent in books may keep people too much away from the active world. Mr. President, you have lived a life of the mind and a life of action. You have shown us wisdom and courage. You have made us believe that we can not only dream our dreams but redeem them.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to the President of the Czech Republic, Mrs. Havlova, and to the people of the Czech Republic.

[At this point, President Havel made brief remarks, offered a toast, and then presented President Clinton with the Order of the White Lion.]

The President. If I put all this on—[laughter]—I may feel like royalty.

Mr. President, I first saw Prague in the second week of January in 1970. I was a young student of no visible means and fairly poor prospects. I remember that I went to Prague with a pair of rawhide boots and a Navy pea jacket I bought in the Army-Navy surplus store. But I learned something there that is as vivid to me today as it was then.

When all of you were at a moment of despair, I saw in the young students I met there a love for freedom that you gave life to again.